NYC Anarchist Black Cross

U.S. Political Prisoner and Prisoner of War Listing

Edition 15.1, February 2022

ALL CONTENT IN THIS EDITION IS UP-TO-DATE TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 2022.

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BLACK/NEW AFRIKAN LIBERATION

Smart Communications/PA DOC
Mumia Abu-Jamal #AM8335
SCI Mahanoy
Post Office Box 33028
St Petersburg, Florida 33733

Birthday: April 24
Mumia is an award winning journalist and was one of the founders of the Black Panther Party chapter in Philadelphia. He has struggled for justice and human rights for people of color since he was at least 14 years old ~ the age when he joined the Party. In December of 1982, Mumia, who moonlighted by driving a taxi, happened upon police who were beating his brother. During the melee, a police officer was shot and killed. Despite the fact that many people saw someone else shoot and then run away from the scene, Mumia was convicted and sentenced to death by what can only be called a kangaroo court. During the summer of 1995, a death warrant was signed, which sparked one of the most effective organizing efforts in defense of a political prisoner ever. Since that time, Mumia has had his death sentence overturned, but still has a life sentence with no opportunity for parole. *More information: freemumia.com*

Sundiata Acoli* #39794-066
FCI Cumberland
Post Office Box 1000
Cumberland, Maryland 21501
**Address envelope to Clark Squire*

Birthday: January 14
In 1969, Sundiata and several other New York City Black Panthers were arrested in connection to what became known as the Panther 21 Conspiracy Case. After enduring 2 years of prison awaiting trial, he and his comrades were acquitted on all charges. The case was historic and a classic example of police and government attempting to neutralize organizations by incarcerating their leadership.

As a result of this political attack and because of the immense pressure and surveillance from the FBI and local police Sundiata, like many other Panther leaders went "underground." On May 2, 1973, Sundiata Acoli, Assata Shakur, and Zayd Shakur were ambushed and attacked by state troopers on the New Jersey Turnpike. Assata was

wounded and Zayd was killed. During the gun battle a state trooper was shot and killed in self defense. Sundiata was tried in an environment of mass hysteria and convicted, although there was no credible evidence that he killed the trooper or had been involved in the shooting. He was sentenced to thirty years. Sundiata was ordered released on parole by a state appeals court in New Jersey in September 2014 when the court ruled the parole board had "acted arbitrarily and capriciously" when it previously denied him parole. The State of New Jersey has appealed the decision and won in October 2018. *More information: sundiataacoli.org*

Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin #99974-555
USP Tucson
Post Office Box 24550
Tucson, Arizona 85734

Birthday: October 4
Formerly known as H. Rap Brown, the Imam came to prominence in the 1960s as chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Justice Minister of the Black Panther Party. He is perhaps most famous for his proclamation during that period that "violence is as American as cherry pie," as well as once stating that "If America don't come around, we're gonna burn it down."

In 1968, Jamil went underground after facing weapons and incitement to riot charges following a rally that occurred in Cambridge, Maryland which left Jamil with a shotgun wound to the head. After 18 months in hiding and on the FBI's Most Wanted list, Jamil resurfaced in an attack of a New York City bar which was targeted for its exploitation of the community. This action resulted in a shootout with police that left Jamil and two cops with injuries. Jamil subsequently spent 5 years in prison for charges related to the incident.

Upon his release, Jamil opened a grocery store in Atlanta, which he maintained until 2000 when he was arrested for the murder of a Fulton County cop. Later that year, another man confessed to the shooting. In 2002 Jamil, was convicted and sentenced to life without parole. *More information: whathappened2rap.com*

Smart Communications/PA DOC
Joe-Joe Bowen* #AM4272
SCI Fayette
Post Office Box 33028
St Petersburg, Florida 33733
**Address envelope to Joseph Bowen.*

Birthday: January 15
Joseph "Joe-Joe" Bowen is one of the many all-but-forgotten frontline soldiers in the liberation struggle. A native of Philadelphia, Joe-Joe was a young member of the "30th and Norris" street gang before his incarceration politicized him. Released in 1971, his outside activism was cut short a week following his release when Joe-Joe was confronted by an officer of the notoriously brutal Philadelphia police department. The police officer was killed in the confrontation, and Bowen fled. After his capture and incarceration, Bowen became a Black Liberation Army combatant, defiant to authorities at every turn. In 1973, Joe-Joe and Philadelphia Five prisoner Fred "Muhammad" Burton assassinated Holmesberg prison's warden and deputy warden as well as wounded the guard commander in retaliation for intense repression against Muslim prisoners in the facility.

In 1981, Bowen led a six-day standoff with authorities when he and six other captives took 39 hostages at Graterford Prison as a freedom attempt and protest of the prison conditions. Much of his time in prison has been spent in and out of control units, solitary confinement, and other means of isolating Joe-Joe from the general prison population. He is legendary to many prisoners as a revolutionary. "I used to teach the brothers how to turn their rage into energy and understand their situations," Bowen told the Philadelphia Inquirer in 1981. "I don't threaten anybody. I don't talk to pigs. I don't drink anything I can't see through and I don't eat anything off a tray. When the time comes, I'll be ready."

Veronza Bowers, Jr. #35316-136
FCI Butner Medium II
Post Office Box 1500
Butner, North Carolina 27509

Birthday: February 4
Veronza was a member of the Black Panther Party, convicted in the murder of a U.S. Park Ranger on the word of two government informants, both of whom received reduced sentences for other crimes by Federal prosecutors. There were no eye-witnesses and no evidence independent of the

informants to link him to the crime. At trial, Veronza offered alibi testimony, not credited by the jury. Nor was testimony of two relatives of the informants who insisted that they were lying. The informants had all charges against them in this case dropped and one was given $10,000 by the government according to the prosecutor's post-sentencing report. Veronza has consistently proclaimed his innocence of the crime he never committed, even at the expense of having his appeals for parole denied for which an admission of guilt and contrition is virtually required. *More information: veronza.org*

Smart Communications/PA DOC
Muhammad Burton* AF3896
SCI Somerset
Post Office Box 33028
St Petersburg, Florida 33733
**Address envelope to Fred Burton.*

Birthday: December 15
Frederick Burton is an innocent man who has diligently attempted to prove his innocence to the courts for 47 years. Prior to his inprisonment, Fred worked for a phone company, was a well respected member of his community and his wife was preparing to have twins. In 1970, Fred was accused and then convicted of participating in the planning of the murder of Philadelphia police officers. While the alleged plan was to blow up a police station, instead a police officer was shot and killed by alleged members of a radical group called "the Revolutionaries."

Cinque Magee* #A92051
T 115
California Medical Facility
Post Office Box 2000
Vacaville, California 95696
**Address envelope to Ruchell Magee.*

Birthday: March 17
Commonly regarded as the longest held political prisoner in the U.S., Ruchell Magee has been imprisoned since 1963. He was politicized in prison and participated in the August 7, 1970 Marin County Courthouse Rebellion— the attempted liberation of political prisoner George Jackson and the Soledad Brothers by Jackson's younger brother Jonathan. Magee was seriously injured in the incident and subsequently pleaded guilty to aggravated kidnapping. He was sentenced in 1975 to life in prison and has been denied parole numerous times. *More information: freeruchellmagee.org*

Ed Poindexter #27767
Nebraska State Penitentiary
Post Office Box 22500
Lincoln, Nebraska 68542

Birthday: November 1
Ed Poindexter is one of the Nebraska 2, charged and convicted of the 1970 murder of an Omaha, Nebraska cop. The cop died when a suitcase containing dynamite exploded in a North Omaha home. Another cop was also injured in the explosion. Poindexter was a member of the Black Panther Party, and his case was, and continues to be, controversial. The Omaha Police withheld exculpatory evidence at trial. The two men had been targeted by the FBI's COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program), which operated against and infiltrated anti-war and Civil Rights groups, including the Omaha Black Panthers. The US section of Amnesty International recognizes Poindexter as a political prisoner. The state's parole board has recommended the men for release, but political leaders have not acted on these recommendations. *More information: http://bit.do/Nebraska2*

Ronald Reed #219531
Minnesota Correctional Facility-Lino Lakes
7525 Fourth Avenue
Lino Lakes, Minnesota 55014

Birthday: August 31
Ronald Reed, a former member of the Black United Front, was convicted of the 1970 shooting of a St. Paul police officer. Twenty-five years after the killing, Reed was arrested and convicted of first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit first degree-murder. He is serving Life in prison. Reed is a former 60s civil rights activist. In 1969, Reed was also among the students at St. Paul Central High School who demanded black history courses and organized actions against racist teachers. He was also instrumental in helping to integrate college campuses in Minnesota. During this period, Reed began to look toward revolutionary theory and began to engage in political street theater with other young black revolutionaries in the city of St. Paul. *More information: http://bit.do/RonaldReed*

Kojo Bomani Sababu* #39384-066
USP Canaan
Post Office Box 300
Waymart, Pennsylvania 18472
**Address envelope to Grailing Brown.*

Birthday: May 27
Kojo Bomani Sababu is a New Afrikan Prisoner of War serving a 55 year sentence. Kojo was captured on December 19th, 1975 during a bank expropriation. He was subsequently charged with conspiracy for an alleged plan to use rockets, hand grenades and a helicopter in an attempt to free Puerto Rican Prisoner of War Oscar Lopez Rivera from the federal prison where he was serving a 55-year sentence for a 1981 conviction of seditious conspiracy..

Kamau Sadiki* #0001150688
Augusta State Medical Prison
3001 Gordon Highway
Grovetown, Georgia 30813
**Address envelope to Freddie Hilton.*

Birthday: February 19
Kamau Sadiki is a former member of the Black Panther Party and was convicted of a 3Kamau Sadiki is a former member of the Black Panther Party and was convicted of a 30-year old murder case of a Fulton County cop found shot to death in his car outside a service station. The police and government told Kamau that if he worked with them and got Assata Shakur to leave Cuba and go to some other country where they could apprehend her that they would not prosecute on the police killing. Kamau refused to cooperate. *More information: freekamau.com*

Dr. Mutulu Shakur #83205-012
FMC Lexington
Post Office Box 14500
Lexington, Kentucky 40512

Birthday: August 8
In 1987 Dr. Shakur was sentenced to 60 years imprisonment for his role in the Black Liberation Movement. In March 1982, Dr. Shakur and 10 others were indicted by a federal grand jury under a set of U.S. conspiracy laws called

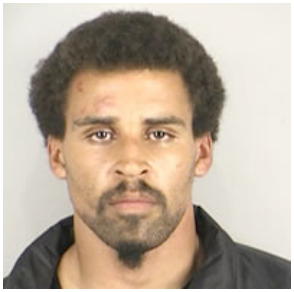
Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) laws. These conspiracy laws were ostensibly developed to aid the government in its prosecution of organized crime figures; however, they have been used with varying degrees of success against revolutionary organizations. In addition, he was charged with participation in the 1979 prison escape of Assata Shakur, who is now in exile in Cuba. After five years underground, Dr. Shakur was arrested on February 12, 1986.While he was on the street, Dr. Shakur challenged the use of methadone as a tool of recovery for addicts. He believed in natural remedies instead and, based on those beliefs, founded the Black Acupuncture Advisory Association of North America. Many people credit Shakur with saving their lives. Dr. Shakur has worked to free political prisoners and to expose government abuses against political organizers. While in prison, he has struggled to create peace between rival gangs. *More information: mutulushakur.com*

ANARCHIST MOVEMENTS

Daniel Baker #25765-509
FCI Memphis
Post Office Box 34550
Memphis, Tennessee 38184

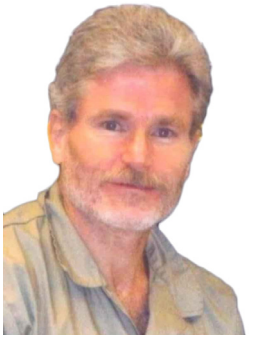
Birthday: September 17
Daniel Baker is an anti-fascist activist who was arrested on January 15, 2021 for social media posts that called for defense against possible far-right attacks on the state's capitol in the wake of the January 6th riots. Daniel was facing up to 10 years for two counts of transmitting a communication in interstate commerce containing a threat to kidnap or injure. On October 12th, 2021 he was sentenced to 44 months in prison and 3 years of supervised release.

Casey Brezik #1154765
Jefferson City Correctional Center
8200 No More Victims Road
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101



Birthday: December 30
In 2010, anarchist Casey Brezik tried to assassinate the governor of Missouri. In June of 2013, he was convicted and sentenced to a dozen years on each of three counts – assault and two armed criminal action charges – and seven years on a second count of assault. All sentences will concurrently run. *More information: supportcasey.org*

Bill Dunne #10916-086
FCI Victorville Medium I
Post Office Box 3725
Adelanto, California 92301



Birthday: August 3
Bill Dunne is an anarchist political prisoner who was sentenced to 90 years in 1979 for the attempted liberation of comrades from Seattle's King County Jail in downtown Seattle, Washington. During the escape a shootout occurred and eventually Bill and two of his comrades were arrested. In 1983 Bill tried to escape from USP Lewisburg and for that was sentenced to an additional 15 years, 7.5 years of imprisoned in the notorious control units at USP Marion. Bill had his first parole hearing in 2014, which was denied. The parole board's reasoning was due to the fact that Bill still maintains communication with anarchist groups and individuals. Not only has Bill been in solidarity with the anarchist movement and the individuals and groups that take part in it, but also Black liberation movements and indigenous resistance movements. Through the years Bill has also taught GED classes at almost every prison at which he has found himself, helping many prisoners get their GED.

Gage Halupowski #21894460
Snake River Correctional Institution
777 Stanton Boulevard
Ontario, Oregon 97914-8335

Birthday: July 1
Gage Halupowski was arrested along with two other protesters in the wake of clashes in Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square, later indicted on four criminal charges, including second-degree assault, unlawful use of a weapon, attempted assault of a public safety officer, and interfering with a peace officer. In November 2019, Gage was convicted and sentenced to six years in state prison.

Eric King #27090-045
FCI Englewood
9595 West Quincy Avenue
Littleton, Colorado 80123

Birthday: August 2
Eric King is an anarchist political prisoner. He was arrested and charged with an attempted firebombing of a government official's

office in Kansas City, Missouri in September 2014. Eric was being charged with throwing a hammer through a window of the building, followed by two lit Molotov cocktails. The criminal complaint states that both incendiary devices failed to ignite. In 2016 he accepted a non-cooperating plea agreement and was sentenced to ten years, the statutory minimum and maximum for the charge he plead guilty to. Since his arrest and subsequent incarceration, he has been extremely isolated from his loved ones and has repeatedly been targeted by the guards, who have regularly put his safety in jeopardy. Eric continues to maintain his dedication to struggling for a world free of domination and oppression. *More info: supportericking.org*

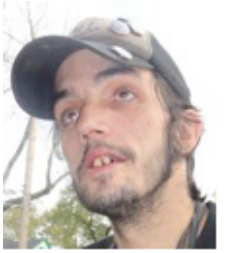
Marius Mason* #04672-061
FCI Danbury
Route 37
Danbury, Connecticut 06811
**Address envelope to Marie (Marius) Mason.*

Birthday: January 26
Marius Mason is a transgender environmental and animal rights activist and anarchist. In 1999, in the name of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) he set fire to a lab at the University of Michigan that was conducting research on genetically modified organisms (GMO). After Marius' husband turned state's-evidence, Marius was threatened with a life sentence for the arson and other acts of sabotage. With little financial stability and fear of dragging his family into a costly legal battle, Marius pled guilty and was given an extreme sentence of nearly 22 years. No one was ever harmed in any of his actions. *More information: supportmariusmason.org*

Cleveland Four

The Cleveland 4 were four Occupy Cleveland activists, Brandon, Connor, Doug and "Skelly." The four were arrested on April 30th, 2012 and accused of plotting a series of bombings, including that of an area bridge. The reality is that the FBI, working with an informant, created the scheme, produced the explosives, and coerced these four into participating. Connor, Doug, and Brandon took non cooperating plea deals and pleaded guilty to all charges. The judge applied a "terrorist enhancement" charge to each of them. Skelly took his case to trial acting as his own lawyer. He was found guilty on all counts by his jury and sentenced to 10 years. The four have appealed their cases and lost. In July, 2019 and May, 2021 Connor Stevens and Skelly, respectively, were released from prison and are serving lifetime supervised release.

As a collective, NYC Anarchist Black Cross has decided to withdraw support for Brandon Baxter of the Cleveland 4. It has come to our attention that Brandon has been problematic, abusive, and manipulative to women who have offered him support, material or emotional. Brandon has not been receptive to concerns about this behavior. We are in solidarity with those who have been impacted by Brandon's toxic behavior and feel it is imperative to discontinue support so as to not facilitate any further harm to women. For these reasons, we no longer feel comfortable supporting or encouraging others to do so. More information: cleveland4solidarity.org



Douglas Wright #57973-060
FCI Gilmer
Post Office Box 6000
Glenville, West Virginia 26351
Birthday: May 31

EARTH/ANIMAL LIBERATION

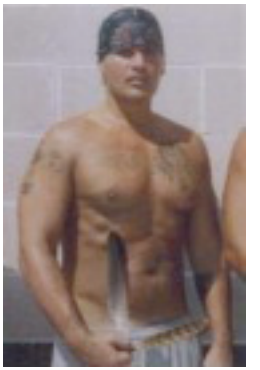
Jessica Reznicek #19293-030
FCI Waseca
Post Office Box 1731
Waseca, Minnesota 56093

Birthday: July 25
Jessica Reznicek is a land and water defender who has lived in and worked with Catholic Worker and homeless populations in the Duluth and Des Moines communities. In 2016, Jessica took a stand against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. After attending, with other organizers, public comment hearings, gathering signatures for valid requests for Environmental Impact Statements, and participating in civil disobedience, hunger strikes, marches and rallies, boycotts and encampments in 2017, Jessica and another person took direct action and disabled construction machinery in order to protect the land. No one was injured by their actions, and the land was protected from the flow of oil for an additional six months.

She has worked on third-party accompaniment work in Palestine, as an organizer during Occupy Wall Street, both at Zuccoti and in Des Moines. She has campaigned against weapons contractor Northrup Grumman in Omaha and protested the drone base in Des Moines. She also protested the construction of a U.S. Naval base on Jeju island, South Korea so as to save the sacred Gureombi Rock in the village of Gangjeon.

In early 2021, Jessica pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to damage an energy facility and was sentenced to 8 years in prison. She received the "federal crime of terrorism" enhancement and was ordered to pay over 3 million dollars in restitution and three years of supervised release. Jessica has a deep love for nature, camping, swimming, hiking, theology, music, gardening, laughter and eco-sustainability, as well as a commitment to self-discovery through deep relationships cultivated in intentional faith-based community living..*Info at: supportjessicareznicek.com*

INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE



Oso Blanco* #07909-051
USP Victorville
Post Office Box 3900
Adelanto, California 92301
**Address envelope to Byron Chubbuck.*

Birthday: February 26
Indigenous rights activist serving 55 years for bank robbery, aggravated assault on the FBI, escape and firearms charges. Oso Blanco is a wolf clan Cherokee/Choctaw raised in New Mexico, whose Cherokee name is Yona Unega. He became known by the authorities as "Robin the Hood" after the FBI and local gang unit APD officers learned from a confidential informant that he was robbing banks in order to acquire funds to support the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico throughout 1998-99. *Info at: freeosoblanco.blogspot.com*

Leonard Peltier #89637-132
USP Coleman I
Post Office Box 1033
Coleman, Florida 33521

Birthday: September 12
Leonard Peltier is a Native American political prisoner and American Indian Movement (AIM) activist, serving two consecutive life sentences for a crime he was framed for— the 1975 killing of two FBI agents on the Oglala Sioux reservation. After the acquittal of his codefendants and being extradited form Canada under false pretenses, Peltier was convicted by an all white jury in a hostile town. Peltier has appealed his sentence many times and has sued the FBI for withholding thousands of

pages of important legal documents from FOIA requests. He is an accomplished painter and writer, having published his memoir, *Prison Writings: My Life Is My Sun Dance*, in 1999. Peltier has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize multiple times. His defense campaign continues to advocate for executive clemency and his transfer close to home.
More information: whoisleonardpeltier.info

OTHER NATIONAL LIBERATION

Xinachtli* #255735
W.G. McConnell Unit
3001 Emily Drive
Beeville, Texas 78102
**Address envelope to Alvaro Hernández.*

Birthday: May 12
Xinachtli (Nahuatl, meaning "seed") is a community organizer from Texas. Police informants were used to monitor Xinachtli's organizing activities in the barrio. They were told Xinachtli was "typing legal papers," "had many books" and was working on police brutality cases in Alpine.

The police knew of Xinachtli's history of community-based organizing and his legal skills. Xinachtli was recognized nationally and internationally as the national coordinator of the Ricardo Aldape Guerra Defense Committee, which led the struggle to free Mexican national Aldape Guerra from Texas' death row after being framed by Houston police for allegedly killing a cop. Xinachtli's human rights work was recognized in Italy, France, Spain, Switzerland, Mexico and other countries. He was sentenced in Odessa, Texas on June 2-9, 1997 to 50 years in prison for defending himself by disarming a police officer drawing a weapon on him. The trial evidence clearly showed Xinachtli was the victim of witch hunts and a police-orchestrated conspiracy to frame or eliminate him.
More information: freealvaro.net

ANTI-POLICE

Andrew Mickel V77400
San Quentin State Prison
San Quentin, California 94974

Birthday: March 13
On November 19, 2002, Andy Mickel shot and killed a cop from Red

Bluff, California. There were no witnesses to the killing, and the crime would have gone unsolved had there not been Internet postings about the crime six days later. The postings read, “Hello Everyone, my name’s Andy. I killed a Police Officer in Red Bluff, California in a motion to bring attention to, and halt, the police-state tactics that have come to be used throughout our country.” In April 2005, Mickel was convicted of one count of first-degree murder. He was subsequently sentenced to death, and is being held on Death Row at San Quentin State Prison.

Reverend Joy Powell #07-G-0632
Bedford Hills Correctional Facility
Post Office Box 1000
Bedford Hills, New York 10507-2499

Birthday: March 5
Rev. Joy Powell was warned by the Rochester Police department that she was a target because of her speaking out against corruption. An all white jury tried her; the state provided no evidence and no eyewitnesses. Rev. Joy was not allowed to discuss her activism or say that she was a pastor. Furthermore, Judge Francis Affronti promised he was going to give her a harsh sentence because he did not like her. She was convicted and given 16 years and seven years concurrent. *More information: freejoypowell.org*

INFORMATION LEAKS/WHISTLEBLOWERS

Daniel E. Hale #26069-075
USP Marion – CMU
Post Office Box 1000
Marion, Illinois 62959

Birthday: August 1
In May 2019, drone whistleblower Daniel Everette Hale was arrested and indicted on allegations that he disclosed classified documents about the U.S. military’s assassination program, believed to have been the source material for a series in *The Intercept* called “The Drone Papers.” On March 31, 2021, Hale pleaded guilty to a single count under the Espionage Act, carrying a maximum sentence of 10 years. On July 27, 2021, Daniel was sentenced to 45 months in prison. *More information: standwithdanielhale.org*

VIRGIN ISLAND 3

The “Virgin Island 3” are a group of activists accused of murdering eight people in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The murders took place during a turbulent period of rebellion on the Islands. During the 1970’s, as with much of the world, a movement to resist colonial rule began to grow in the U.S. occupied Virgin Islands. From 1971 to 1973, there was a small scale Mau Mau rebellion taking place on the islands. This activity was down-played by the media, for fear it would damage the tourist industry, which the island’s survival depends on. *More information: virginislands3.yolasite.com*

Abdul Azeez* #19-1878
Citrus County Detention Facility
2604 West Woodland Ridge Drive
Lecanto, Florida 34461
**Address envelope to Warren Ballentine.*
Birthday: January 9

Hanif Shabazz Bey* #19-1952
Citrus County Detention Facility
2604 West Woodland Ridge Drive
Lecanto, Florida 34461
**Address envelope to Beaumont Gereau.*
Birthday: August 16

Malik Smith* #19-1874
Citrus County Detention Facility
2604 West Woodland Ridge Drive
Lecanto, Florida 34461
**Address envelope to Meral Smith.*
Birthday: October 8

GET INVOLVED

If you're in the NYC area, come to one of our events! We host political prisoner letter-writing dinners every other Tuesday (upcoming events are generally posted on the blog or you can email us to join our announcement list). We also host or co-host several other special events throughout the year, including the annual Running Down the Walls. Contact us if you'd like to be added to our announcement list for upcoming events and important news, or follow us on social media.

Whether or not you live in the area, we encourage you to become an ABCF Warchest contributor. One can do so via mail or paypal (make your payment to nycabc@riseup.net) at a level of $5, $10, or $20 per month or on an ad hoc basis. Contact us for more information about this program and how to contribute.

For those outside of NYC, we also are available to answer questions and generally support people in starting a prisoner support organization or ABC chapter in your area.

WRITE A LETTER

Writing a letter to a political prisoner or prisoner of war is a concrete way to support those imprisoned for their political struggles.

A letter is a simple way to brighten someone's day in prison by creating human interaction and communication—something prisons attempt to destroy. Beyond that, writing keeps prisoners connected to the communities and movements of which they are a part, allowing them to provide insights and stay up to date.

Writing to prisoners is not charity, as we on the outside have as much to gain from these relationships as the prisoners. Knowing the importance of letter writing is crucial. Prisons are very lonely, isolating, and disconnected places. Any sort of bridge from the outside world is greatly appreciated.

With that in mind, avoid feeling intimidated, especially about writing to someone you do not know. And if possible try and be a consistent pen pal.

What to Write

For many, the first line of the first letter is difficult to write—there is uncertainty and intimidation that come with it. Never fret, it's just a letter.

For the first letter, it's best to offer an introduction, how you heard about the prisoner, a little about yourself. Tell stories, write about anything you are passionate about--movement work and community work are great topics until you have a sense of the prisoner's interests outside of political organizing.

And what we hear from prisoners time and time again is to include detail. Prison is so total that the details of life on the outside become distant memories. Smells, textures, sounds of the street all get grayed out behind bars. That's not to say that you should pen a stream-of-consciousness novel.

For things you should and should not remember when writing to folks, read "Guidelines."

Guidelines

You cannot enclose glitter or write with glittery gel pens or puff paint pens. Some prisons do not allow cards or letters that include permanent marker, crayon, or colored pencils and it is best to check with the prisoner beforehand. That said, it is usually best to write in standard pencil or non-gel pen in blue or black ink.

You cannot include articles or anything else torn out of a newspaper or magazine. However, you can print that same article from the internet or photocopy it and write your letter on the other side.

You cannot include polaroid pictures (though these days, that's not much of an issue), but you can include regular photographs. Some prisoners are limited to the number of photos they can have at any given time, so again, check with the prisoner before sending a stack of photos.

If mailing more than a letter, clearly write the contents of the envelope/package. Label it "CONTENTS" and include a full list.

A couple of technical details—make sure you include your return address inside the letter as well as on the envelope. It's common for prisoners to receive letters without the envelope. Make sure to paginate—number each page, such as 1 of 3, 2 of 3, et cetera. This insures that if pages of your letter don't make it to the prisoner, they will know it.

Be careful about making promises and only commit to what you are certain you can do. This should go without saying, but it's not a good idea to make commitments to someone you don't have a relationship with. If you can't maintain a correspondence, let them know up front. Conversely, if you want to maintain an ongoing correspondence, let them know that as well.

If you are writing to someone who is pre-trial, don't ask questions about their case. Discussing what a prisoner is alleged to have done can easily come back to haunt them during their trial or negotiations leading up to it.

Don't valorize the person you are writing. Keep in mind that these are folks coming from the same movements and communities that you are. They aren't looking for adoration, but rather to maintain correspondence.

Finally, do not write anything you wouldn't want Fox News, a cop, or a judge to see. Assume that intelligence and law enforcement agencies are reading your letter. On a related note, this advice goes for any snail mail, e-mail, texting, messaging, or talking that takes place in known activist spaces or homes. This is not legal advice, just basic movement survival common sense (to review, read "Staying Safe").

STAYING SAFE

You never have to, and it is never a good idea to talk to police, FBI, ICE, or any other law enforcement agent or investigator. Other than providing your name and address to a police officer who is investigating a crime, you never have to talk. You will not outsmart them by talking or sound less suspicious by talking or make things easier for yourself by talking. Anything you say will be used against you and others. If they catch you in a lie or inconsistency they can charge you with a separate crime.

Say: I have nothing to say to you OR I need a lawyer present to continue this conversation. If they come to your home, workplace, or school, ask them for a business card and tell them your attorney will be in contact with them.

The FBI may threaten you with a grand-jury subpoena for not talking. It doesn't matter because they were probably going to subpoena you anyway and you weren't going to talk anyway. If you receive a grand jury subpoena you should immediately contact a lawyer and let others in your community know. People can be held for up to six months for refusing to talk to grand juries. Even so, for our own survival, it is imperative that we take that risk and do not participate in grand juries as they are used to indict political prisoners and prisoners of war.

In the federal legal system, the grand jury is used to decide whether someone should be charged ("indicted") for a serious crime. The grand jury hears evidence presented by the prosecutor: the U.S. Attorney. The grand jury uses subpoenas to gather this evidence. It can subpoena documents, physical evidence, and witnesses to testify. The "special" federal grand jury, created in 1970, can be used to investigate "possible" organized

criminal activity rather than a specific crime.

Recently, there have been more than one active grand jury in new york city. There are also more than likely informants and agent provocateurs infiltrating the anarchist community here.

It is imperative that we continue our work as anarchists including the support of political prisoners and prisoners of war towards the abolition of the state, of capitalism, and of all oppression. It is also imperative that we do so in a way that is smart, strategic, and sustainable.

NYC Anarchist Black Cross

NYC Anarchist Black Cross is a collective focused on supporting US-held political prisoners and prisoners of war and opposing state repression against revolutionary social justice movements. We are a Support Group of the continental Anarchist Black Cross Federation.

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